

Posted by u/AmazingLark 7 hours ago 

The Rules of War

OC OC

"Yeah, that sucks for them. But why are you angry at us?" Amanda Smith, leader of the elite Beartooth division, looked up at Commander Her'clud in confusion. "You said you wanted the planet taken at any cost, so we took it. So what's the problem?"

"The problem? The problem is that you killed every single sentient being on the planet! You took no prisoners! There were over 718 million life forms two cycle ago, and now there are none! Have you no mercy or restraint?!?!"

Amanda stepped to the side to avoid being hit by Commander Her'clud's flailing tentacles. She wiped the slime off her arm with a look of disgust, and then turned to the rest of the Galactic Tributary. "Did any of you bother to read my holo-messages detailing this siege? Anyone, anyone at all?" She was greeted with silence and blank looks. She sighed to herself. It didn't matter what species she was dealing with, the leaders at the top were all the same- annoying, arrogant, and absolutely impossible to communicate with.

"If any of you had bothered to open my holo-messages, you would already know that the vast majority of the planet fled within the first two hours of the siege. As required by our Rules of War, all civilians, injured, surrendering combatants, and such were allowed to flee the planet without fear of attack. After the first wave fled, we launched one Devastation missile at the second most populated city. Again according to our Rules of War, we had messaged the planet to warn them of the impending missile strike, giving plenty of time to evacuate. We recorded less than two thousand confirmed kills from this event. This led to the second wave of flight from the planet. We followed up with a squadron of In Between drones, to ferret out the remaining hostiles. We confirmed just over five thousand drone kills."

Amanda pulled up her messages to the Council, letting them play silently in the background as she continued her recap of the siege.

"We paused our actions to allow the third wave of inhabitants to flee. After sufficient time had passed to let the ships leave the system, we began in-person actions. Of the original 718 million inhabitants, less than 80 thousand remained on the planet. Sixty-two Beartooth units were dispatched to find and eliminate any remaining hostiles. It took just over one cycle to clear the planet, and less than one thousand kills were confirmed. The rest of the planet's inhabitants were deemed to be non-hostile, and as required by our Rules of War, were not harmed. They were escorted to evacuation ships, we programmed the coordinates to their next colonized planet, and sent them on their way."

A glance around the room told her that this was not what the Council had expected to hear. One of the reasons humans had been excluded from the intergalactic community for so long was because of their reputation for war. Humans were known to be

one of the fiercest, violent, and most bloodthirsty species ever contacted. They certainly had the bloodiest past of all the intergalactic members.

Amanda not only knew of this reputation, she actively used it to her advantage. She had even used it when thinking of the motto for her division (Fingers on the trigger, ready aim fire!). So she wasn't surprised that the Council had automatically jumped to the wrong conclusion when hearing that she had cleared an entire planet of all sentient beings in less than two cycles.

But to call up the entire Galactic Tributary to consider expelling the entire human race? She couldn't believe the audacity of these leaders. And then she had a thought...

"This meeting was called for based on undocumented fears, and could have been avoided completely if any of you had bothered to read my messages. As you can see by the messages playing behind me, a total of 47 updates were given over the course of the siege. Each update was sent to the full Council, and yet none of you opened a single one? Why is that? Why was my division asked to clear this planet, only to face disciplinary actions for completing the objectives of the Council?"

She was again met with silence and blank stares, but this time the stares were a little too blank, too practiced... And with those stares, she had her answer. Commander Her'clud opened his mouth to speak, but Amanda glared at him with such force that he immediately closed his mouth and began to turn a horrible shade of orange.

Amanda raised her voice, and spoke to the Tributary with all the authority befitting her position as leader of the most accredited military division the galaxy had ever seen. "As a member of the intergalactic community, it is my right to know who has requested the exclusion of the entire human race as punishment for completing Council objectives. Let them speak now, and defend their position."

After a moment, her request was answered. Amanda barely stifled the shivers that always came when communicating with an Ecconichian. She listened as the beautiful melodies filled the air, rising and falling in wonderful harmony. She listened as the notes turned dark and low, creating a story of insanity and horrors with music alone.

When the final notes ended, Amanda wanted to cry out in relief. Instead, she braced herself and responded. "The history of the human race is indeed mired with war, genocide, and horrors that many species here will hopefully never experience. It is always filled with acts of insanity, acts that have no reason whatsoever as their motives.

"But the act of sending delegates to the Galactic Tributary year after year to request the official creation of Galactic Rules of War is not an act of insanity. Even though humans have been ridiculed, mocked, and disrespected for asking this year after year, we will continue to bring this before the Tributary until it is done.

"The Council gave the directive to take planet Ximotin by any means necessary. It is known far and wide that my Beartooth division is the most successful military division the galaxy has ever seen, and we were specifically requested by the Council for this task.

"We could have chosen to nuke the entire planet and render it uninhabitable for the next hundred millennium. We could have chosen to release Skin missiles in the atmosphere and afflict the entire population with an incurable plague. We know the Ximo population is very susceptible to high pitched noises, so we could have just blasted air raid sirens and driven them all insane.

"Instead, by our Rules of War, we were required to give non-combatants multiple chances to flee, without fear of attack. We were required to announce all missile strikes and give the intended target area enough time to evacuate. We were required to evaluate any potential hostiles before shooting to kill. We were required to escort all remaining non-combatants to evacuation ships and see them safely on their way.

"The history of the human race is mired with war, genocide, and horrors. But it is also filled with men and women who stood up against those acts. It is filled with men and women who risked everything to punish the worst offenders in our race. It is filled with hope that we will grow and rise above those acts.

"Human delegates will continue to advocate for Galactic Rules of War because we know how necessary they are. We know that war brings out the worst in any species, and that Rules of War may be the only thing to prevent incomprehensible acts of evil from occurring. We know that Rules of War keep individuals from crossing the line between acceptable and unacceptable. And we know that they work. They save lives, planets, and entire species.

"Because of our Rules of War, a planet with 718 million life forms was emptied in less than two cycles, with just under eight thousand deaths.

"I believe my division was chosen to clear planet Ximotin as an example of why we should be expelled from the intergalactic community. Instead, we have done the opposite and shown why Rules of War are necessary and how they are used.

"Should the Galactic Tributary decide to expel the human race anyway, so be it. But I believe it would be much better if you actually open my damn messages and take a proper look at them. Think of what could have been, and then see what actually occurred. Advocating for Galactic Rules of War is an act of hope, not insanity. The siege of planet Ximotin is now a real-life example of how this could only help the intergalactic community as a whole.

"We will abide by the decision of the Galactic Tributary, for better or worse. Make your decision and communicate it to us as soon as you are done. Now if you'll excuse me, I have a very long report to give my commander."

With that, Amanda stepped off the podium and exited the chambers, followed by the few ranked members allowed to accompany her. She walked away with her head held high, and hope that this would finally result in the creation of the official Galactic Rules of War. Because if this didn't do it, nothing would.